

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) An electronic document management system, comprising:
 - a data creation device for creating data by dividing an electronic document into two or more partial documents having an of arbitrary or fixed length;
 - a signature device for generating a plurality of items of information, each item of information being for verifying [[the]] validity of each of a respective one of the partial documents ~~and affixing a digital signature to documents, generating~~ an aggregate of the generated items of information for verifying the validity of all the partial documents, and generating a digital signature to the aggregate of the generated items of information;
 - a masking device for masking, ~~by deleting or modifying,~~ the electronic document ~~targeted for a digital signature~~ on an individual partial document basis; and
 - a verification device for verifying the validity of the masked electronic document by verifying the aggregate of the generated items of information using the digital signature.
2. (Currently amended) The electronic document management system according to claim 1, wherein the verification device ~~confirms the validity of the whole electronic document by verifying the aggregate of the information for confirming the validity of the partial documents; and confirms examines~~ the validity of each of the partial documents of the masked electronic document ~~targeted for verification by verifying the generated item of information for confirming the validity of each of the partial documents, each partial document, and based on a result of the item verifying~~ determines whether the electronic document is which of the partial documents has been partially deleted or modified.

3. (Original) The electronic document management system according to claim 2, wherein the verification device displays the result of the verification on a display unit for the purpose of notifying a verifier whether the electronic document is partially deleted or modified while assuring the validity of the whole electronic document.

4. (Original) The electronic document management system according to claim 1, wherein the data creation device divides the electronic document by adding a delimiter to the beginning and/or end of the partial documents.

5. (Original) The electronic document management system according to claim 4, wherein the electronic document is a document created with a markup language, wherein the partial documents are markup units for the document created with the markup language, and wherein the delimiter is a tag for the markup language.

6. (Currently amended) The electronic document management system according to claim 2, wherein [[the]] each item of information for confirming verifying the validity of a respective one of the partial documents is a hash value which is generated with a hash function for the respective one of the partial documents.

7. (Currently amended) The electronic document management system according to claim 2, wherein [[the]] each item of information for confirming verifying the validity of a respective one of the partial documents is a digital signature for the respective one of the partial documents.

8. (New) An electronic document management method, comprising:
 - dividing an electronic document into two or more partial documents of arbitrary or fixed length;
 - generating an item of information to verify validity for each of the partial documents;
 - generating an aggregate of the generated items of information for verifying the validity of all the partial documents;
 - generating a digital signature to the aggregate of the generated items of information;
 - masking the electronic document on an individual partial document basis; and
 - verifying the validity of the masked electronic document by verifying the aggregate of the generated items of information using the digital signature.
9. (New) The method according to claim 8, further comprising:
 - examining the validity of each of the partial documents of the masked electronic document by verifying the generated item of information for each partial document; and
 - based on a result of the item verifying, determining which of the partial documents has been partially deleted or modified.
10. (New) The method according to claim 9, further comprising displaying the result of the verifications to notify a verifier whether the electronic document is partially deleted or modified while assuring the validity of the whole electronic document.

11. (New) The method according to claim 9, wherein the dividing of the electronic document includes adding a delimiter to the beginning and/or end of each of the partial documents.

12. (New) The method according to claim 11, wherein:

the electronic document is a document created with a markup language;

the partial documents are markup units for the document created with the markup language; and

each delimiter is a tag for the markup language.

13. (New) The method according to claim 9, wherein the generating of the item of information to verify validity for each of the partial documents comprises generating a hash value with a hash function for each respective one of the partial documents.

14. (New) The method according to claim 9, wherein the generating of the item of information to verify validity for each of the partial documents comprises generating a digital signature for each respective one of the partial documents.